

THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY

By Roy L. McCardell

\$10,000 for 1,000 Words or Less
for an Idea for a Sequel to

"THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY"

The American Film Manufacturing Company's Picturized
Romantic Novel in Chapters.

This contest is open to any man, woman or child who is not connected directly or indirectly with the Film Company or the newspapers publishing the continued story.

You are advised to see the continued photoplay in the theaters, read the story as it runs every week, and send in your suggestion. By following the narrative in print and observing the action on the screen, you will be given a splendid opportunity to supply a suggestion for a sequel.

A board of three judges will decide which of the suggestions received is most acceptable. The judgment of that board will be absolute and final.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

Suggestions for a sequel will be accepted up to and including February 20, 1916. As it is the idea that is wanted, no attention will be paid to literary style. Contestants must confine their contributions to 1,000 words or less.

Send all suggestions to THE AMERICAN FILM MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 6227 BROADWAY, CHICAGO, ILL.

SUMMARY OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A bitter feud, extended over an heirloom, "The Diamond from the Sky," dated in a meteor by an ancient, has passed between Old Arthur Stanley and his cousin, Judge Lamar Stanley. The feud is recounted by the fact that the succession to the Stanley carillon in Fairfax may come to an American family. When his wife dies after having given birth to a daughter, Col. Stanley buys and substitutes as his heir a new-born gypsy boy. Three years later the gypsy mother, who is a woman of the desert, is being forced to reveal the secret of the "diamond from the sky" and a document that holds the secret of the feud.

When the daughter, Esther Stanley, when Hagar has grown to love, goes up Hagar returns to Virginia with her, going to fight the wrong done her and to claim her inheritance. She obtains the consent of Dr. Lee, Col. Stanley's old friend, to adopt Esther as his daughter in the hope that Hagar's son, the supposed Arthur Stanley II, will fall in love with Esther and so will become mistress of Stanley hall, which is her right. Dr. Lee, who is his cousin, dies in the hope that Hagar's son, the supposed Arthur Stanley II, will fall in love with Esther and so will become mistress of Stanley hall, which is her right. Dr. Lee, who is his cousin, dies in the hope that Hagar's son, the supposed Arthur Stanley II, will fall in love with Esther and so will become mistress of Stanley hall, which is her right.

In endeavoring to steal the diamond from Dr. Lee, Hagar causes the death of the doctor. Arthur Stanley, who is the son of the doctor, is in the hope that Hagar's son, the supposed Arthur Stanley II, will fall in love with Esther and so will become mistress of Stanley hall, which is her right. Dr. Lee, who is his cousin, dies in the hope that Hagar's son, the supposed Arthur Stanley II, will fall in love with Esther and so will become mistress of Stanley hall, which is her right.

Arthur, finding that a document has been lost, is determined to find it. He is killed by the hand of a gypsy, who is a woman of the desert. Arthur Stanley, who is the son of the doctor, is in the hope that Hagar's son, the supposed Arthur Stanley II, will fall in love with Esther and so will become mistress of Stanley hall, which is her right. Dr. Lee, who is his cousin, dies in the hope that Hagar's son, the supposed Arthur Stanley II, will fall in love with Esther and so will become mistress of Stanley hall, which is her right.

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CHAPTER 10.

OLD FOGS WITH NEW FACES.
AFFECTED as he was with his deformity, Quabba, the hunchback-like of the sunny face and happy heart—was as agile and as nimble as the monkey Clarence, his companion on his way through the world. But now the hunchback is neither sunny of face nor happy of heart. A wild tremor of fear, anxiety, and remorse shakes him in an agony of terror and confusion.

Sending the rocking stone, piled from the perch where it had existed for centuries, had only meant death for all below, thought Quabba. Instead of saving his young and old mistress and his gypsy friends from the raid of desperate tramps led by Luke Lovell, Quabba now deemed that he had destroyed those he had loved, as well as their enemies.

But as he ran panting down the mountain side Quabba saw that some of the gypsies, warned by the clatter and roar of the landslide the massive, bounding, loosened, rocking stone had started, had fled to safety. He saw some half score of gypsy men and women telling rapidly up the opposite slope of the valley from the destroyed gypsy camp. Through the dust that was settling in a cloud over the debris and rubble where the camp had stood the strange faces of Quabba could mark the ragged figures of some of the assaulting tramps limping away from the scene of destruction, as bootless as they had come.

Then as he neared the scene the anguished Quabba could mark that the fleeing gypsies had paused half way up the opposite slope and had turned back to return to their submerged, annihilated camp. With an aching heart and a great burning sense of reproach for his rash deed that had worked such ill when he had meant but good, Quabba could see that Esther and Hagar were not among the hysterical gypsies returning to the scene of destruction.

When Quabba reached the heaps of stone and wreckage that had been the camp site he found the gypsies already gathered in a group to where the van of Hagar lay overturned and half covered by a mass of rocks and earth. Then his heart beat again with joy as he heard the voice of Esther, trembling, yet brave for all that, issue from beneath the van. "If you are friends, save us," was Esther's cry. Strong and willing Quabba leapt at the heap of rock and rubble, and strained and lifted at the van.

Soon the van was raised from over the cavity its very overturning had supplied. There were Esther and Hagar, trembling but unharmed save for a few minor scratches and bruises, but in the bottom of the cavity lay the bulky form of Luke Lovell, stark and lifeless. Kindly hands drew Hagar and Esther out, and Quabba felt at their feet, uttering incoherent self-accusations mingled with equally incoherent thanks and prayers. A kindly hand threw a coat across the intimate face and form of the gypsy outlaw.

The saving of gypsy lives was due to the providential fact that the onslaught of the marauding tramps led by Lovell had driven the gypsies from the danger zone where the avalanche of stones and earth had struck the camp. How many of the invaders lay buried beneath the settled landslide the philosophical gypsies neither cared nor sought to ascertain. It was later

found that Luke Lovell evidently had been only stunned and not killed, as was at first supposed. For when the gypsies returned, after making their shelter tents away from the rubble of the landslide for Esther, Hagar, and their children and women folk, no trace of Lovell could be found. He had recovered consciousness, it was evident, and had stolen away, fearful of the vengeance of his former Romany associates.

Quabba deemed it best to keep secret the



IN VAIN HE PROTESTS.

fact that he had been the genius of the landslide. It had been a fatal success. He affected the philosophy of the gypsies in the matter, and agreed with them that some good had come out of the general destruction, even if there were only the riddance of the unscrupulous Luke Lovell and his ruffian rabble, the tramps.

Acknowledged as their princess and reigning over them as regent for the afflicted Hagar Esther appointed a head man from the gypsies in the place of the disposed and banished Lovell, and returned with Hagar and Quabba to Stanley hall, which was still held by Hagar on the terms of lease she had taken from the receiver in bankruptcy for the fugitive Arthur Stanley, still fleeing from justice, wrongfully under the onus of being the murderer of Dr. Lee.

Luke Lovell, when he recovered consciousness, drew himself from the hollow beside the new righted van. He had no intention of endeavoring to rejoin such of

the tramps who had attacked the camp with him and might have escaped unhurt from Quabba's landslide. Luke stole away unobserved and his one thought was to make his fortune from his knowledge of the Stanley secret—the knowledge he had gained from the document in Hagar's strong box. Luke Lovell realized at last the source of the dead Matt Harding's gypsy wealth that now was Hagar's, and which since Hagar's sudden affliction no one knew the hiding place of.

One thing Lovell felt sure of was that this wealth had not been decreased under Hagar's stewardship while sane. Wherever the treasure was it was not in Hagar's brass bound chest. Only documents were in that chest, but these were treasures of themselves. For one of these old papers especially had set forth plainly the fact that Hagar's long dead husband, the greedy Matt Harding, had trafficked with the great folks of Fairfax in his own flesh and blood. Here was a fortune to be obtained by himself, as it had been obtained by Matt Harding, Luke Lovell thought. And he limped away unseen from the destroyed gypsy camp, and trudged resolutely to Fairfax, some eight or ten miles away.

There was no one at Stanley Hall to pay him for keeping or telling the Stanley secret, but Luke Lovell knew enough of the Stanley and their funds to realize his best market would be with Blair Stanley's mother. If Arthur Stanley, so-called, was Hagar's son, a gypsy changeling, then Blair Stanley was the real heir to the Stanley carillon, to which, according to the old family tradition, the heir was commanded to carry the diamond from the sky.

But at the portals of the home of Blair Stanley's mother, the proud, cold widow would hold no traffic with the sinister gypsy who clamored at her threshold with a secret to sell. She ordered him to begone, and professed no interest in the war



UNLESS YOU LEAVE MY PREMISES THIS INSTANT, I SHALL HAVE YOU ARRESTED.

Hagar recovered her faculties, she must remain silent as to Blair's guilt were he Esther's husband, thought Mrs. Stanley. As for Arthur Stanley, so-called, there was slight fear of his returning and asserting his claims to the Stanley carillon and the diamond from the sky. The shrewd mother of Blair Stanley guessed now the true cause of Arthur's flight and continued absence. It was because he also had learned the Stanley secret.

At Stanley hall Esther, made a woman and resolute by all the tragic occurrences that of late had befallen her, resolved it was her duty to examine further into the documents in Hagar's brass bound box. Esther had endeavored vainly to lift the cloud from Hagar's mind by earnest inquiries and kindly beseechings. But, as one in a daze, Hagar would only rave from her reveries and moan, "My son, give me back my son, my little babe!"

Then Esther read the documents. The proof was plain. She was in her rightful place at Stanley hall, for she was Esther Stanley. But she resolved, through the love she bore for him she had known as Arthur Stanley, that she would take the secret to the grave. She would spare Arthur the shame she knew his proud spirit would feel. What to her was place and position here in Fairfax among a proud people who, so far as their women folk were concerned, had ostracized and ignored her.

Yet when we are young we have our hopes and dreams. Esther's hope and dream was the return of Arthur, the sharing of the secret with him, and his love. Then all would be well. So it was that Esther was not wholly surprised when Blair Stanley's mother called at Stanley hall and proffered her friendship and assistance. There were no confidences exchanged between them. Esther suspected that Blair's mother vaguely knew, but in her loneliness and having no friend save the humble though devoted Quabba, Esther was glad to accept the proffered friendship of her austere kinswoman, though neither spoke of the lie.

Mrs. Stanley suggested that Hagar be taken to Richmond for treatment for her mental affliction. She also insisted that Esther should go to Richmond and be introduced into the best circles there by Mrs. Burton Randolph.

Quabba had been left behind at Stanley hall, but Quabba suspected that Blair's mother was an old foe with a new face of friendship. As always, he resolved to guard Esther with his ever eager though humble efforts, and Esther and Hagar with Mrs. Stanley were not long in Richmond before the faithful Quabba followed.

Mrs. Randolph had suggested to Blair's mother, when she found Mrs. Stanley desired her son's return, to consult with that astute private detective, Tom Blake, in setting the claims that were against the reckless Blair in Richmond.

Blake effected a conference between Blair's mother and Abe Bloom, the gambling housekeeper, who held the bad check for \$2,000 he had cashed for Blair, and who was the most pressing claimant against him. At this conference, although the accusation was not made, Mrs. Stanley soon surmised that Blake and Bloom knew of Blair's guilt of the murder of Dr. Lee. It was from Blake and Bloom, through the agency of the inky thumb print on the bad check, that the guilt had been established, his mother soon inferred. She also surmised that it was from this source Hagar had obtained her proofs. In her



WITH A GLAD CRY SHE RAN TO THE WINDOW AND WAVED A WELCOME TO QUABBA BELOW.

present condition Hagar was oblivious of such matters now. The only two, then, in all the world who knew were the detective and the gambling housekeeper.

It was not necessary to enter into any detailed arrangements. Mr. Bloom was sententious and explicit.

"You make good this bum check of your son's," he said, "and me and Blake won't say nothing or cause your son any trouble. But there's one thing else, I've got to have this big stone what you call the diamond from the sky. My brother advanced money on it, an even if he hadn't, that's my price for keeping my mouth shut," he added, "and I'll see that Blake here says nothing, neither."

"But the diamond has disappeared. We don't know where it is," said Mrs. Stanley coldly, though in her heart she raged at the presumption of the grasping, vulgar gambler.

"I'll turn up—them big stones always do. It's one of the finest in the world, but that's my price!" retorted Mr. Abe Bloom. "If it ever turns up you Stanley can replevin it. No one can dispute your title to it. There ain't another one like it in the world. But when you Stanley get it, it comes to me! That's understood and agreed, eh, Blake?"

There was a strange, imperturbable gleam in the keen eyes of the detective, who had maintained his usual taciturnity during this strange conference, but he nodded his head and answered quietly, "Yes, that's understood and agreed."

Reaching Richmond, it had been no trouble for Quabba, at his old occupation of organ grinder, to find the house of Mrs. Burton Randolph, where he knew Esther was stopping. He had just reached the house, and had just been ordered to move on by a passing policeman, when a taxicab drove up and Blake and Bloom alighted and entered the Randolph residence.

This visitation was such a surprise to the policeman that he readily vouched the information as to who these individuals were, when Quabba inquired.

"Them?" said the policeman. "Them's two of the wisest guys in Richmond—Tom Blake, who runs the Blake Detective agency, and Abe Bloom, the biggest gambler in this burg. I wonder what they are doing calling on this grande dame, Mrs. Burton Randolph? Maybe Abe Bloom and Tom Blake are going into society!"

Then, ordering Quabba to move on again, he moved on himself.

Quabba with his monkey and organ moved on, but only to the side of the house. A detective and a gambling housekeeper? These were strange visitors indeed, and, suspecting the motives of Mrs. Stanley's sudden patronage of Esther as he did, Quabba squatted close by the low window of the reception room and listened. He overheard enough to realize that Blair Stanley's return was being arranged, and he knew this boded no good to his fair young mistress.

After the detective and gambler had departed, Quabba sent his ambassador and collector of external revenue, Clarence, the monkey, up the wistaria vines to the upper chamber, which he surmised might be Esther's. He was right in his surmise. Esther, who, like Mrs. Randolph, had withdrawn when visitors on private business had been announced for Mrs. Stanley, was in her room.

The chattering of the monkey on her window sill roused Esther from a reverie of Arthur, and with a glad cry she ran to the window and hugged the affectionate little beast and waved a welcome to the smiling Quabba below. Then Quabba laid his finger to his lips as a sign of secrecy, yanked the string to recall his ambassador, and departed.

Beside the track in the glaring California desert, Arthur Stanley, or, as he calls himself, "John Powell," lay stunned after being thrown from the Overland limited, which he had boarded from horseback as

the train had panted up the grade in the desert. He had meant to warn the robbers of the robbers lying in wait for them, but they had imagined him a desperate single-handedly attempting a holdup and had thrown him off.

His horse, as all horses he handled, loved him. The faithful and affectionate animal roused him by nuzzling at him. Arthur, half stunned, mounted his affectionate four-footed friend and galloped after the train. At the top of the grade the unmounted robbers halted the express with an electric signal on the track too great to be raised by an engineer endeavoring to pass through it.



WITH A GLAD CRY SHE RAN TO THE WINDOW AND WAVED A WELCOME TO QUABBA BELOW.

When Arthur arrived upon the scene two robbers were in the express car and two were going through the Pullmans. Another had compelled the fireman to disconnect the locomotive and, covering the engineer, had made him drive the derailed machine up the track some distance from the standing train.

Scarce knowing what he did, Arthur galloped by and, mounting the engine at the end of the tender from his horse's back, grappled with the lone robber covering the engineer. A desperate struggle followed by the furnace door. Seizing a large wrench, the engineer aimed a blow at the robber struggling with Arthur, but the blow missed and his friend and Arthur was stretched senseless on the firing box. The robber, with a curse, jumped from the engine and ran, rejoining his companions.

In one of the Pullmans, Vivian Marston, who was now Mrs. Hagar Stanley, was traveling as "Mr. and Mrs. Guy Peyton" were among those held at pistol point. An anxious woman passenger to whom Vivian had shown the diamond from the sky had betrayed the fact she possessed it. Despite her pleadings, entreaties, and even curses—curses that were chorused by the chagrined Blair—the chuckling robbers bore off the great gem with their other booty. Laden with a sack of valuables, and taking also \$100,000 in bank notes from the express messenger, the robbers disappeared.

Within a few hours the sheriff and his posse of deputies and railroad detectives were hot on the trail, and "John Powell," sheep herder, after being hunted a few brief moments, was back at his lonely occupation.

Vivian, despoiled of the jewel for which she would have risked her soul, reproved herself and her raging bridegroom that they did not die gloriously in defense of it. In her bitter rage Vivian taunts Blair by telling him she only married him for the diamond, and now that it was gone she must go and regain it, or else her life is vain. In vain he protests. She threatens to give him over to the police, and deserts him at Los Angeles, and writes to Abe Bloom and Richmond telling of the loss of the diamond, and asking for funds. The deserted and raging Blair pawns what possessions the train robbers have left him, and, under his assumed name of Peyton, hides in a mean hotel, after waiting for him Mrs. Burton Randolph, to foreclose for him with his mother—with what results we have seen.

Far off in the desert fastnesses the pursuit of the posse after the train robbers is hotly on. A shot, and the team and saddle of the fleeing outlaw is empty. But as the outlaw falls the diamond from the sack of valuables, flies from his now nerveless hand and lies glittering bare unprotected by a clump of cacti as the posse thunders by. Another shot going home, and the face-mooned outlaw drops from his saddle. Another shot and his riderless horse drops dead in its tracks. As this horse falls, the treasure sack with the bank notes falls half under the dying animal. The bulk of its prostrate body covers the treasure and of bank notes, and marks it from view of the posse that gallops almost over the dead horse's hoofs as the pursuit of the three surviving desperadoes goes on.

A month later "John Powell," sheep herder, is sent to the desert to find a strayed flock. Beneath the skeleton of a buzzard's feast, a dead horse, he finds the stolen treasure. In a wild frenzy of hysterical delight "John Powell" remembers "Monte Cristo," which, as the wild young master of Stanley hall, he had read with greedy eagerness. And so, like Monte Cristo, he stands a great and grim, in the burning desert waste. "The world is mine!"

"The diamond is lying near; it gleams in the sun on the desert sand, among rattlesnakes and cacti, but 'John Powell,' blinded with the treasure that he grasps from the house of a mouldering horse, sees it not. And there the diamond lies. Who will get it next?"

[To be continued.]

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